

Regional Forrest Assessment
Submission to the
South-Western Cypress State Forrest

The purpose of this submission, which represents only the views of the Wiradjuri Elders of Condobolin, is to raise the urgent need for your committee to support the maintenance of current employment levels of Aboriginal people employed in the Logging and Timber Industry. This submission allies to current business operating within the Lachlan and Riverina Valleys and as such, the Elders of Condobolin must continue to be consulted as the review progresses.

Statistically there is background to the issues to consider under the assessment. There is no mention of the disparity in the rates of participation, retention and of Aboriginal people in Logging and Timber Industry compared with non-Indigenous people.

Statistics, according to recent government reports, underline the continuing inaccessibility of employment to Aboriginal people and the consequent limitation on their ability to enter the Industry and other skilled occupations underpinning the economic development of Aboriginal communities in the modern economy.

The establishment of a properly structured economic and employment strategy would address some of those deficiencies in participation in not only the Logging and Timber Industry and subsequently, contribute to individual family financial security this also contributes to local and regional economic independence and development.

Economic concerns are not the only basis for this call. There is the overarching theme of national reconciliation. The continuation of Aboriginal people employed will allow and encourage ongoing opportunities for future employment and formation of communities to introduce intervention measures that relate to the protection of the local ecology.

Indirectly our Aboriginal culture is one that will establish diversity in cultural belief, while contributing to general economic development in this region, and the state.

In the course of this review, the committee must not forget in its analysis and descriptions of the economic and social values outlined in the Terms of Reference and the decisions that will be made and what directions the final recommendations will take. In short, the arguments for Aboriginal People inclusion are based on cultural social and economic ideals. The beginnings of such a review are already in place.

The reality of life in our communities demands a different approach to the provision and delivery of greater employment and economic opportunities. I encourage your committee to endorse this submission.

Elder Mrs Bonnie Merritt

25 March 2010

